

### 3.1 Summary of Aviation Breakout Session

***Conference on Updating the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan  
July 31 – August 1, 2000  
New Orleans Marriott***

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This document summarizes the items discussed during the Aviation Breakout Session held on July 31 and August 1, 2000. This Breakout Session, which was one of the six sessions held for the various transportation modes, served as an important component of the first *Conference on Updating the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan* held at the New Orleans Marriott Hotel.

The primary purpose of this Breakout Session was to 1) review and validate the aviation elements included in the 1996 *Louisiana Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan (SITP)* and related benchmarks included in *Louisiana: Vision 2020*, and 2) identify new or additional strategic issues for consideration in the Plan Update. The related *SITP* and *Vision 2020* items are attached.

Approximately 15 persons attended the Breakout Session, which included representatives of several commercial service airports including Alexandria, New Orleans, and Shreveport; Chennault Industrial Airpark; Louisiana Airport Authority; LDOTD; and other public and private sector stakeholders.

#### **SITP Elements**

The Aviation Breakout Session addressed all 10 aviation-related elements and eight of the intermodal-related elements contained in the *SITP*, as well as several infrastructure benchmarks included in *Vision 2020*. The attendees recommended keeping the majority of the *SITP* elements. Only one element was recommended for deletion, A-10, funding of Phase I of an intermodal transportation and international trade facility adjacent to New Orleans International Airport. This element was recommended for deletion because the property on which the facility was planned has not been acquired and the New Orleans International Airport is no longer considering developing the facility.

One intermodal element was noted to be completed, I-9, lobbying for release of a significant portion of the Federal Airport and Airways Trust Fund and the Federal Highway Trust Fund to the States. The latest aviation funding bill, the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (AIR 21), increases investment in the aviation system by more than \$10 billion over the next three years. In addition to aviation funding, the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) increased highway funding to record levels.

It was recommended that the following *SITP* elements be kept as part of the *Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan Update*:

- A-2 Market aviation system to passengers and industry outside the state
- A-4 Land acquisition/aviation easements for obstruction removal
- A-5 Update forecasts of general aviation activity
- A-6 Study improvements of intrastate air service and international passenger/cargo service
- A-7 Study feasibility and role of vertical take-off aircraft in Louisiana aviation
- A-9 Fund airfield and passenger terminal capacity improvements

While these elements had varying estimated costs and have different completion status, the attendees thought these elements were important and should continue to be included in the *SITP*.

Three of the *SITP* elements related to deciding on the development of a new regional commercial service airport in southeast Louisiana or improving New Orleans International Airport, including development of an additional runway. These three included:

- A-8 Continue Studying Feasibility, Location, and Environmental Impacts of New Regional Commercial Service Airport in Southeast Louisiana
- A-11 Implement the New Orleans International Airport Improvements Recommended in Phase II of the Air Intermodal Feasibility Study, Including an Additional Air Carrier Runway
- A-12 Construct a New Regional Commercial Service Airport in Southeast Louisiana to Replace Commercial Operations at New Orleans International and Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airports

The attendees noted that the three are linked together and should be combined as one element. In general, the consensus was that improvements should continue be made to New Orleans International to ensure the airport continues to be fully operational. A decision on the ability to expand the existing New Orleans International Airport to meet long-term needs, including development of an additional runway, should be made in conjunction with the decision about the development of a new regional airport.

The feasibility of a new regional commercial service airport should continue to be studied simultaneously with the environmental analysis about the feasibility of constructing an additional runway at New Orleans International. Currently, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is being prepared for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) related to the feasibility of developing a new runway at New Orleans International. The Louisiana Airport Authority is contracting for a risk analysis, which is being partially funded by the FAA, to determine the costs and benefits of a potential new airport. While separate entities are responsible for the development of the

two facilities, at some point a decision about where Federal and state funding should be focused needs to be made.

### **Vision 2020 Benchmarks**

There are seven aviation-related benchmarks contained in *Louisiana: Vision 2020*. The meeting attendees noted general agreement with the benchmarks, but recommended revisions to several. The benchmarks were as follows:

- 2.3.12 Number of foreign cities with direct air service from Louisiana
- 2.3.13 Number of Louisiana airports in top 30 U.S. airports (based on enplanements)
- 2.3.14 Number of Louisiana airports in top 30 U.S. airports (based on air cargo)
- 2.3.15 Number of airports which can accommodate jumbo aircraft
- 2.3.16 Number of airports which can accommodate international jet aircraft
- 2.3.17 Number of airports which can accommodate commercial jet aircraft
- 2.3.18 Number of airports which can accommodate corporate jet aircraft

Benchmark 2.3.12 was recommended for expansion to also include the number of domestic cities with direct air service from Louisiana. By examining the number of domestic cities, additional comparisons could be drawn and specific effort made to market domestic air service opportunities.

Benchmarks 2.3.15 through 2.3.18 related to the number of airports that could accommodate certain aircraft types. These benchmarks identified specific runway lengths and strengths that should be provided to accommodate the identified aircraft type. Given the changes in the airline industry's fleet, these benchmarks were recommended for revision to reflect the current airline industry fleet and general runway length guidelines.

Benchmarks 2.3.15 and 2.3.16 should be combined and should reflect the number of airports that can accommodate international, wide-body jet aircraft with runway lengths exceeding 10,000 feet. A new benchmark could replace 2.3.16 to reflect the number of airports that can accommodate regional jet aircraft with runway lengths of 6,500 feet. Benchmark 2.3.17 should be revised to reflect a minimum runway length requirement of 7,600 feet to accommodate commercial jet aircraft. Benchmark 2.3.18 should continue to reflect the number of airports that can accommodate corporate jet aircraft, but the runway length requirement should be increased to 5,000 feet.

### **Other Important Items Discussed**

There were several other important issues raised during the Aviation Breakout Session. These issues focused on: 1) funding for airports; 2) the need for an additional goal for the study related to public participation; 3) coordination between the Millennium Port project and a new regional southeast Louisiana airport; and 3) land use guidelines.

Airport funding has improved with the passage of AIR 21, but an important issue for Louisiana is the state's ability to provide matching funding at the new levels. It was noted that, under today's budget circumstances, the state's full 10 percent match for AIR 21 monies could not be met. Several airport representatives also noted their concern about competing for state funding with the Louisiana Airport Authority. An LDOTD representative noted that a new priority system has been proposed and submitted to the legislature for approval that would give higher priority to projects that have local funding participation. Additional priority is already given to projects in communities that have appropriate airport zoning in place.

In reviewing the goals from the *1996 Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan*, it was noted that public outreach was not addressed and does not appear to be part of this study. Specific wording for an eighth goal was prepared to address public outreach as follows:

"To coordinate transportation planning with local and regional citizen-based comprehensive/land use plans"

This goal would also address the issue of land use planning and the importance of coordination as part of any transportation planning project. In addition to coordination, discussion of airport land use guidelines focused on the need for working with the local communities about airport land use guidelines.

### **New Plan Elements**

No new plan elements were recommended related to aviation during the Breakout Session.